



Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

Steven L. Beshear, Governor

Robert D. Vance, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear names new head of Kentucky Horse Racing Commission

FRANKFORT, Ky. – (Feb. 27, 2012) – Governor Steve Beshear today announced he will appoint veteran Thoroughbred trainer John T. Ward as the new executive director of the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission. Ward, who along with his wife Donna operate John T. Ward Stables in Paris, Ky., as well as training and racing operations in New York and Florida, will assume his new role April 1. He succeeds Lisa E. Underwood who resigned in November 2011 to return to private law practice.

“John Ward brings to the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission years of experience as a trainer and horseman, and his understanding of the needs of our struggling horse industry make him an excellent choice to oversee the development and regulation of racing and breeding in Kentucky,” said Gov. Beshear.

The 66 year-old Ward is a Kentucky Derby-winning trainer with Monarchos in 2001. He has also trained winners in the Kentucky Oaks as well as the Breeders’ Cup. He currently serves as a commissioner on the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission, a position he will resign in order to accept the executive director position.

KHRC Chairman Robert M. Beck, Jr., Vice Chair Tracy Farmer and Public Protection Cabinet Secretary Robert Vance conducted extensive interviews, and Ward emerged as their top choice. Beck says Gov. Beshear’s appointment of Ward as the new executive director is the right call.

“John has an impeccable reputation not only in Kentucky, but throughout Thoroughbred racing across the country,” said Beck. “I believe Kentucky is fortunate to have his knowledge and skills to lead us as we continue to look toward the re-emergence of one of Kentucky’s signature industries as the world-leader in breeding and racing.”

Ward has also served on various horse industry commissions and councils under former Governors Brown and Patton. He is a founding member and past president of the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association and the Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders (KTOB) where he helped in the implementation of the Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund. Ward also served on the TOBA Sales Integrity Task Force and the Kentucky Equine Drug Research Council. He and his wife were also named recipients of the 2002 Kentucky Thoroughbred Media’s Ambassadors of Racing Award.

“While Kentucky has made great strides in the past five years to address the safety and integrity of Thoroughbred racing, there is much more we can still do,” said Ward. “I am excited to be working with one of the most talented and dedicated staffs of any commission in the country. This is a tremendous honor and I look forward to the challenge.”

Ward said he will surrender his Kentucky trainer’s license once he assumes his new position.

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